

# Connecting Scientific Discovery and Public Support



**John Evans**  
Chair , Sociology Professor , Sociology

## CURRENT RESEARCH

### Understanding the connection between scientific discovery and public opinion

Should science lead society or should society lead science? That is the question Dr. John Evans, Professor and Chair of Sociology at University of California, San Diego is asking. Modern science and medicine are among the greatest of our human inventions, resulting in the reduction of suffering and making our lives easier in incalculable ways. But, this will not happen if the public does not support science. The vast majority of the research ultimately requires the public to have faith in science. However, the success of modern science and medicine has led some to the conclusion that science is the only way of knowing anything, and that science should lead society instead of serving it. The traditional view of the public has been that science should serve our humanistic values, not determine them. When science no longer follows society's values, but sets those values, support for science declines.

- In his research, Dr. Evans will examine cases where scientists are promoting a value position and compare these views with those of the public. For example, should the evolutionary principle of increasing efficiency be considered the moral foundation for humanity? Is the biological definition of the human all there is to being human? Should we follow the medical imperative to heal at all costs and try to increase life expectancy to 140 years?
- As a social scientist, Dr. Evans examines what society thinks of these questions. Currently he is writing a book about what average Americans think a human being is, and comparing that to the biologists' vision of a human. In previous books he has examined how the profession of...

## AFFILIATION

 University of California, San Diego

## EDUCATION

- Ph.D., in Sociology, 1998, Princeton University
- M.A., in Sociology, 1995 , Princeton University

## AWARDS

- Distinguished Book Award
- Chancellor's Summer Faculty Fellowship
- Summer Writing Fellowship

## RESEARCH AREAS

Humanities, Sociology

## FUNDING REQUEST

Your donations will assist in the investigations of the public's view of science and medicine. Help Dr. Evans discover new insights that will assist science in retaining the support of the public so that it can help solve the problems of the 21st century.

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